

Case Study: Rebekah – 2 Nations, One Body

Description

22 [Two] children struggled together within her; and she said, If it is so [th
23 The Lord said to her, [The founders of] two nations are in your womb, and t
24 When her days to be delivered were fulfilled, behold, there were twins in h
25 The first came out red all over like a hairy garment, and they named him Es
26 Afterward his brother came forth, and his hand grasped Esau's heel; so he w

Genesis 25:22-26 AMPC

Rebekah, the mother of 2 nations. Rebekah is seldom mentioned in Christian spaces, and I feel that like her husband Isaac, she is almost considered just a space holder in the story from Abraham to Jacob. I want to park in Genesis 25 to evaluate some points that we can learn from the life of Rebekah to better evaluate our own lives.

- Two children/nations struggled in her womb – Rebekah's pregnancy is the first biblical story to involve twins. Moment of transparency, I used to think that Cain and Abel were twins until I probably a teenager, and finally read and comprehended the story. If you read the earlier verses in Genesis chapter 25, you'd see that Rebekah had difficulty conceiving, and that Isaac interceded on her behalf. In the chapter it says that Isaac was 40 when they got married, and 60 when Rebekah gave birth. I say this to say that Rebekah had experienced a long period of bareness in a relationship that one would expect their to be fruitfulness. To have experienced 20 years of disappointment, and a lack of fruitfulness, to only become pregnant, and experience difficulty, was most likely demoralizing. The Lord answered her prayer, just for her to experience a new form of pain and disappointment, that I don't believe she'd have chosen if she knew it would come as a result of her blessing. 2 children, sharing one body, but struggling for control, in an environment that was designed for 1. I believe that Rebekah's situation is symbolic for what we as Christians experience during our journey to live renewed/transformed lives. Two children/nations, our flesh, carnal nature, and our spiritual nature, occupying one temporary body, and fighting for control. We, like Rebekah have lived a life wanting and praying for more, only to receive an answer to that prayer, and experience what Dr. Dharius Daniels calls, "the backside of the blessing," which is the unexpected difficulties that come with God's call on our lives. Regularly we experience our flesh or "natural" self struggle to remain alive as we intentionally pursue and become like Christ. In that process our spiritual nature is strengthened and at times struggles to deny the desires and tendencies that our "natural" self would like to express. This battle as it plays out in our mind, heart, and emotions will sometimes cause us to become fatigued, or burdened and in those moments we are to remember God's promises to sustain our faith.
- the separation of two peoples has begun in your body – Our "natural" man and our spirit man are two very distinct natures, and can't co-exist. When we accept Christ into our lives and make a decision to live for him, there must be a separation internally, where we only feed and nourish the spirit man. Each decision we make in our lives feeds one of our "natures," which inherently means that one of them will have to die. Unlike Rebekah in the passage who will ultimately give

birth to BOTH children, and therefore her body must nourish both of them while they occupy the same space; the separation that occurs in us will ultimately lead to the death of one of our natures. In my opinion, while the “natural” nature never truly dies, we can nourish our spiritual nature so consistently that it becomes instinctive to respond to and operate in our spiritual nature thereby rendering our “natural” man silent and ineffective. While the separation within Rebekah’s body occurred within a 9 month period, there is no timeframe for our separation, rather it is a continual choice and reflection that we experience throughout life. Rebekah was a first in carrying two children within her body, quite like some of you may be as the first in your family or community to be pregnant with potential, and a “nature” that can’t coexist and must therefore separate from that which it has been sharing space with since birth. Separation is natural in life, even if it is not easy.

- afterward his brother came forth, and he grasped Esau’s heel – I want to use this excerpt to highlight that as we have two nations at war within us, which will lead to a separation, we must remember like I said previously that our “natural” nature is never truly dead. I say this because as we see in verse 26, as Jacob reached out to grab Esau’s heel even after he had “broken forth,” our old nature will sometimes at the most random time, reach out to pull us back into whatever we have been delivered from. From the same place can come thoughts or desires that are contrary to how we are trying to live our lives, and in those moments it can feel like something has taken hold of us and is trying to pull us back to the place that we prayed to never return to. The presence of the dual nature is natural, I believe we were born with it, however our response or carrying out of that nature is the part that we must take accountability for. Though both children were inside of Rebekah, she had no control who was delivered first, however she was responsible for the housing that they both occupied. However we that are carrying these spiritual children are responsible for not only the environment that we create internally and externally, but we have a more active role in determining what is birthed, and when it happens in regards to how we steward our spirit, mind, and body.

Reflection Time

Do you have 2 nations struggling within yourself, or do you feel that you carry 1 “nature” within yourself? How are you handling your “natures,” and what could/should you be doing differently? I recommend that you find healthy spiritual community where you can safely grow and experience accountability that will enable you to produce fruit that is consistent with what God has for you.

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